

**Item Title:** Proclaim September Kinship Care Month

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners proclaims the month of September as “Kinship Care Month” and recognizes Kinship Caregivers for the care they provide to relative children.**

**Item Summary:**

Proclaiming September 2019 as Kinship Care Month will increase awareness and bring attention to the ongoing needs of Wake County children and youth being cared for by a relative caregiver. Kinship Care Month is both a celebration and an advocacy strategy. There is a great need for more programs and policies that support children being raised by relative caregivers. Proclaiming September as Kinship Care Month brings focus to the many children living with relative caregivers and may encourage more families to become involved in the lives of relative children.

Kinship Care is the raising of children by grandparents, other extended family members, or adults with whom they have a close family-like relationship because the biological parents are unable to raise them. Kinship Care reduces the need for children to be placed in foster care, thereby allowing them to maintain connections with communities, schools, and family members. These connections increase the likelihood of eventual reunification with birth parents.

It costs substantially less for children to live in Kinship Care than in foster care. The average monthly foster care payment is \$440 per child compared to the average monthly Kinship Care payment of \$198.

**Additional Information:**

Nationally over 5 million children are living with grandparents in Kinship Care Placements. Of these 5 million, over 225,000 reside in North Carolina and approximately 5,000 reside in Wake County.

Kinship Care is an indispensable resource, yet many kinship families face daunting obstacles with very little support. Children in their care may have many of the same problems that children in foster care face. These problems include developmental disabilities, maltreatment, trauma, and loss. Additionally, kinship caregivers may be older, have limited resources, and often cope with the intergenerational issues associated with the birth parents' inability to parent successfully. Despite these obstacles, studies conclude that Kinship homes provide as good if not better outcomes for children than foster care placements.

Children have better outcomes when they are raised in their extended family of origin. These outcomes include:

- Enables children to live with the love and care of familiar people and in familiar settings
- Helps a child make and maintain extended family connections

- Reinforces a child's sense of cultural identity and positive self-esteem
- Continues lifelong family traditions and memories
- Supports the child in building healthy relationships within the family
- Fulfills the child's need for safety and well-being and creates a sense of stability in the life of a child.

**Attachments:**

1. Proclamation